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ABSTRACT

The document describes thirteen types of non-traditional students, as identified by the University of Toledo Community and Technical College (Ohio), and the student services available to them at this institution. Non-traditional student types include those who did not do well in high school, those who interrupt their education for at least one year for a variety of reasons, those without occupational goals, part-time students, those attending college due to job-related pressure, the older student, the housewife, the divorced or widowed woman, the student previously suspended from another institution, the returning baccalaureate degree holding student, those who do not have a high school diploma and who may or may not have passed the General Educational Development Test, those who need substantial financial aid, and those supported financially by the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. Counseling, guidance and advising services available to these non-traditional students are outlined and include pre-admissions counseling, proficiency testing, course and program advising, counseling, tutorial labs, financial aid and placement services, and high school and industry contacts. A bibliography of six titles related to non-traditional students and their impact on higher education completes the document. (LH)

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May 5, 1976

Memorandum To: C. J. Roberts
Thru: Dean Frank Thomas
From: R. J. Somogye and E. H. Draheim
Subject: The Non-traditional Student

This memo is in response to your request for our views of non-traditional students. Hopefully, our views will be considered in planning for counseling needs for both campuses.

In view of the leveling off of enrollment by traditional students in higher education, our attention must turn toward the non-traditional student. Population statistics show that the number of students graduating from high school will continue to decline. In addition the trend seems to be in the direction of a lower percentage of the traditional high school graduates entering college.

Dr. Lee Noel, Regional Vice President of ACT spoke at Dana Auditorium on April 13, 1976. He pointed out that the traditional student pool of 18-22 years old makes up 9% of the United States population, while 58% of the population are in the 23-60 year age group. This latter group comprises the majority of non-traditional students. It is this group that higher education must prepare to adequately serve. Traditional patterns of education and supportive student services were developed to serve traditional students. The traditional patterns no longer adequately serve growing numbers of non-traditional students.

Dr. Oscar G. Mink effectively stated the dilemma that faces higher education.

Be they business or education, bureaucracies rarely function to accommodate diversity. Most specialists in organization theory note that colleges and universities stand out as the most poorly organized and managed institutions in America. And

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Community Colleges are not exempt from this criticism. Some community colleges fulfill many of their functions, but the majority of them are static, regressive institutions. Their established practices and norms tend to negate the current commitment to equality of educational opportunity and to accountability for student learning.

In trying to accommodate diversity many complex problems emerge. Problems reflecting the varied backgrounds and learning rates of the students; problems which demand modifications in the existing methods of instruction, student services, and community services and which require flexibility to respond to special local problems. One of the major problems is to identify the non-traditional student in order to provide for change.

The non-traditional student can best be identified by contrasting him from the traditional student. The traditional student is one whom has been a successful high school student. He is the student who enters college without undue delay after graduation from high school and who normally continues in college without interruption. The non-traditional student on the other hand, includes all others such as the following:

1. The student who did not do well in high school and graduated in the bottom half of his class is a non-traditional student. There are many reasons why he may want to attend college but his interest in traditional methods of study and education are not necessarily one of them.

2. Another type of non-traditional student is the student who interrupts his education by a year or more because of employment or military service, marriage, or indecision. Regardless of the reason for the interruption, the students' study habit pattern has been broken. Long periods of interruption increase the difficulty of returning to the discipline of study.

3. The student who is undecided about attending college because he or she has not set occupational goals is a non-traditional student. The student is searching for a goal and is asking for help in finding a goal.

4. The student who attends college part-time and is employed full-time qualifies as a non-traditional student. This student does not want to work at his present level of employment all his life and wants to up-grade himself. Often, he cannot afford to quit his job in order to attend school full-time.

5. The student who is required to attend or is pressured into attending college by his employer is a non-traditional student. This student is often not aware of the need for more education and is similar to the student who interrupts his education in that he often experiences difficulty in returning to the discipline of study.

6. Another type of non-traditional student is the older student seeking to retrain himself after a number of years in a job. This student finds that his job no longer satisfies his personal needs and is searching for meaningful direction. This search often leads to the realization that additional education is needed. The older student is similar to the undecided student except that he has narrowed his field of search as a result of personal experiences, health and age.

7. The housewife seeking to expand her career is a non-traditional student. The women's lib movement and its exposure through various news media have made women more aware of the possibilities of expanding their horizons. More and more women are turning to education to satisfy their personal vocational, and/or avocational needs.

8. The divorced woman or widow who must gain an employable skill in order to provide financial support joins the non-traditional student ranks. She may also be seeking an added dimension to her life through the social/educational experience.

9. The second chance student who has been academically suspended from another college or university joins the ranks of non-traditional students. His previous lack of success is often related to immaturity or lack of positive goals. With added maturity and increased responsibility this student often becomes more goal directed and is able to be academically successful.

10. The student who has a baccalaureate degree and who is enrolled as an undergraduate with degree is a non-traditional student. This student has reevaluated his goals or needs to augment his degree to become employable.

11. The non-high school graduated who may or may not have passed the G.E.D. test is another type of non-traditional student. This student may be classified as being in one or more of the above groups.

12. The student who could fall in any or all of the above categories but who would be unable to attend a post secondary educational program without substantial financial aid is a non-traditional student.

13. The special student who is attending school as part of a rehabilitation program and is supported financially by the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. This student may be a traditional student or a non-traditional student who has interrupted his education for various reasons, i.e. out patient from a Mental Health Clinic, Parolee after paying a debt to society, or has physical problems prohibiting his being able to function in many occupations.

A second major problem related to the non-traditional student is the need for providing a new pattern of counseling and advising. The non-traditional student needs to have career

decision counseling, academic advising, and personal counseling combined. This counseling service must be provided by professional personnel. The more traditional part time faculty academic advisor and separate personal counselor are no longer adequate.

An example is the case of student "A". Student "A" is currently enrolled in the Community College. This student called the college for an appointment to talk with somebody about admission into one of the engineering technology programs. The appointment was made with the counselor-advisor of engineering technology. The counselor gathered the following background information during the counseling session.

1. The student had been tried as an adult and was sentenced to life in prison for murder at the age of 15.
2. The student spent nine years of his sentence, during which time he received some occupational training and he also passed the G.E.D. test. (High school Level General Educational Development Examination).
3. The student is now on parole.
4. His education is being paid for by the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation.
5. His stated goals are to get an education so that he can get a good job and take his place in society by earning his own living, etc.

It can be readily understood that the educational process for this student requires more than information about technical education. In addition to providing career information someone must take the responsibility for his total socialization. He is being successful in the classroom but is having social problems and may be forced to drop out of school.

The example of student "A" is one of many examples related to each of the 13 types of non-traditional students identified in this memo.

Ideally all students should be provided needed services. The more non-traditional the student, the more imperative it is that services be provided on a one to one basis.

Presently within the personnel and cost limitations, the Community and Technical College Counseling, Guidance, and Advising Center is providing the following:

1. Pre-admissions counseling is provided; in person, by telephone, and by mail for any one seeking information about programs and course offerings of the college or the University.
2. Proficiency testing is given to aid the advisor and student in making the selection of entry level courses in Mathematics, English, and Reading.

3. Course and program advising which often is presented as a portion of occupational guidance information.

4. Counseling--career educational, and personal counseling, is performed with individuals and groups.

5. Tutorial labs for math, writing, and accounting are offered.

6. Financial Aid and placement service are provided by University Student Service personnel located at the Scott Park Campus.

An additional service offered by the college and the University that is directly related to the non-traditional student is that of contact with high schools and industry. The high school contact does include the traditional student. The industrial contact is not only a community service, but provides a vehicle for the employed part-time student to up-grade his education. Since growth of staff and budget has not kept pace with enrollment increases, the services are becoming more and more inadequate. It is no longer possible to provide needed one to one service to students. The services provided to non-traditional students at present are not to be construed as adequate. Services are in some cases only representative of those needed to adequately serve the non-traditional students.

Our affiliation within a University environment has served as a barrier to development of programs beyond those traditionally deemed necessary to serve the "college" student. It is hoped that this brief paper identifying the non-traditional student and his needs will serve as a beginning for those who are interested in providing needed and necessary services for this "new breed" of student.

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Those who are concerned and interested in gaining a further understanding of non-traditional students and their increasing impact on higher education are referred to the following books:

Chickering, Arthur W. Commuting Versus Resident Students. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975.

Chickering presents research which indicates that commuting students do not get the most from college. He suggests ways to include short term residential experiences into the educational plans of all students.

Cross, K. Patricia. Beyond the Open Door. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass Inc., 1974.

The author of Beyond the Open Door, seeks to clarify the critical task of serving the needs of non-traditional students.

_____. Planning Non-Traditional Programs. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975.

Planning Non-Traditional Programs presents findings of research projects sponsored by the Commission on Non-Traditional Study.

Current issues concerning the non-traditional student are analyzed. The importance of guidance and planning are discussed.

_____. Accent on Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976.

Cross examined the results of over 1,000 studies on teaching, learning, and student development. She interprets information and shows how it can be applied to help traditional and non-traditional students achieve success in college.

Hall, Laurence and Associates. New Colleges for New Students. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974.

This book contains contributions by a number of people who present their experiences and ideas derived from non traditional educational methods employed with non-traditional students.

Hesburg, Theodore M., Paul A. Miller, and Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. Patterns for Lifelong Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973.

This book explores the role of education in a changing world. Exploration of methods for building systems of learning as a lifelong process are presented. The book should be read by all of those recognizing the urgency of the need for institutional accommodation.